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THE DAY OF JUDGMENT.

PART II.

IN reading Mrs. Carlyle's letters, it should always be remembered that we gather into a day the petty perplexities, the domestic torments, of forty years. The impression produced upon the reader is entirely different from the actual repression of her life. So far from proclaiming her trials, it was her un-wisdom to conceal them too much. Her habit—which Carlyle uses, and has a color of right to use, in self-defense, and which Froude freely presents in his favor—was so studiously to hide from him the anguish which he cost her that he did not suspect its existence. This is no valid plea, because he wrested this very silence to his own destruction by charging it to her want of care about household matters. "Alas! can that need to be said? Insane that I was!" he moans in the stern awakening of death. But the letter in which she wrote it was addressed to him; and he read it in life, in her life as well as his, without remorse, without feeling, without notice. Guilty as he was for not knowing her sadness, it seems certain that he did not know it.

In reviewing the notes containing her planning and counter-planning to meet his caprices, and to take advantage even of his roughnesses, "Alas!" he cries, "how little did I ever know of these secret wishes and necessities—now or ever!"

"She flickered round me like perpetual radiance." "Her intellect was clear as starlight, and continued so; the clearest intellect among us all." "She shone round me like a bright aureola when all else was black and chaos." "At lowest," he bears witness, "nothing unpleasant was ever heard from her. All that was gloomy she was silent upon, and had strictly hidden away." "She was weak, weak,—far weaker than I understood. But to me she was bright always as stars and

diamonds. Nay, I should say a kind of cheery sunshine in those otherwise Egyptian days."

In fact, household and petty cares did not disturb her. She was a natural housekeeper. She made no clamor herself about work. It was his clamor that destroyed her peace. "Now that I do not see you driven desperate with the chaos, I can take a quiet view of it. . . . I clean beautifully when you do not dishearten me with hypercriticism. Try all that ever you can to be patient and good-natured with your Goody, and then she loves you and is ready to do anything on earth that you wish. But when the *signor della casa* has neither kind look nor word for me, what can I do but grow desperate and fret myself to fiddle-strings?"

"With no husband to study, housekeeping is mere play." It was his violent, unreasonable, unending exactions that broke her down; his heartless, reckless, personal indifference to herself that wrecked her life. He must be alone by day, because otherwise he could not write. He must be alone by night, because otherwise he could not sleep. When he worked, he could bear no one in the room; when he walked or rode, he could bear no one at his side. She was loth to see it. When she found he did not care for her singing and playing, she merrily consoled herself with imputing the blame to his want of taste rather than her want of skill. So far from being quick to take offense, she was slow, reluctant,—eager to forgive. Her letters are playful, tender, caressing, long after terrible misgivings are revealed. She wore away in solitude because Carlyle plunged away from her.

"Carlyle," she says to his mother, on the bleak top of the Craig, "never asks me to go with him, never even looks as if he desired my company." He had forbidden her mother on the plea that he wanted her all to himself. He had dragged her from London, where she was a toast, and set her to scrubbing and solitude, while he cultivated his genius. No competent servant, unmarried to Carlyle, would come to their Bleak House, so he used his wife's superior intellect simply to grind him out a superior quality of oatmeal. And she never flinched. He betrayed her, utterly, persistently, remorselessly, in her highest, holiest, tenderest nature; but she kept faith with him and with herself. He went through the form of kissing her good-bye with a lighted cigar in his mouth, and she forgave him. His service was a

harsh and menial slavery where she had looked for high sympathy; it was aloneness where she had counted on companionship; it was a tempestuous clamor for incidentals where she had been solemnly pledged to the essential; it was a demanded, constant, and unacknowledged sacrifice of her, and a constant, claimed, and compassed self-indulgence for him, and she stood firm. She failed of her expected and fitting guerdon, but she never failed in her service. She failed in the result, but she never failed in the effort.

Her mistake lay in imagining her servitude imperative. While she was dragging her life over three pairs of stairs, she was dazing her brains with fear lest she should be sick and not able to go over the stairs at all. Idle fears: Carlyle would have been just as well off if she had not gone over the stairs at all. It would have been for the good of his soul, if she could have looked at his midnight wanderings with the same coolness as the moon-calf who asked her, if "Mr. Carlyle bees ony uneasy through the nicht and 's ga'an staiveren aboot the hoose, will ye bid him gie us a cry at five in the morning?" It was much wiser to make Mr. Carlyle consume his own smoke, by calling the maid at five in the morning, than to permit him to consume his wife's spirit to no purpose whatever. When Carlyle left her to do the house repairing alone and betook himself to Scotland, it was not ill, since he was out of the way to hinder as well as help. When, after three months of workmen, it was finished, and he came back to order and cleanliness and, after three days' enjoyment of it, rose up to inform heaven and earth that all was wrong, and the carpenters must be brought back and chaos be reinstituted, it was still not ill. Here a woman of more robust wisdom than Mrs. Carlyle would have shone as the stars for ever and ever, because she would have said sweetly to the raging genius: "Yes, dear, and now is your turn. I have taken mine. Arrange everything just as you please, while I take a three months' trip to Scotland." Genius may be a form of insanity, but insanity is amenable to law.

"You certainly would be better," argues the unvalued wife, painfully relinquishing or showing that she has relinquished all aspiration for companionship in her husband's intellectual life, "for me to stand between you and this new servant. . . . You must give your orders in simple, unfigurative speech, and one after another. If you were to tell her in the same breath three

things to be done, she would fly at them all at one time and spin round on her heel simply."

Here was a golden opportunity which the perfect, the ideal, wife would have turned to Carlyle's spiritual and eternal good. If instead of following him with minute instructions she had let him take his own course, he might have dined on the logical consequences, to the edification of his character, if not his digestion. When the wife's weary hands were folded in their final rest, the fastidious husband did not die. Whatever may have been the flavor of his chops or the condition of his stomach, he lived many years of cheerful and ruddy health. He might just as well have done without her drudgery in her life as in her death. She feared that his frightful impatience with any new servant, untrained to his ways, would drive a woman out of the house with hair on end, if allowed to act directly upon her. But it would have been wiser to let his frightful impatience drive a procession of women out of the house, until starvation should have taught the prudence of self-control; since the only effect of Mrs. Carlyle's constant standing between, to gather the spears into her own breast, was her own prolonged death-wound, and Carlyle's posthumous annotation, "Oh, heavens, the comparison! It is too true!"

Intellectually she could and practically she sometimes did give as sharp cut and thrust as Carlyle himself. One seldom gets from one's dearest foe a cleaner, keener satire than she dealt to her husband at Dingwall.

"For the rest, in spite of all objections, 'for the occasion got up,' I dare say you are pretty comfortable. Why not? When you go to any house, one knows it is because you choose to go; and when you stay, it is because you choose to stay. You don't, as weakly amiable people do, sacrifice yourself, for the pleasure of 'others.' So, pray, do not think it necessary to be wishing yourself at home, and 'all that sort of thing' on paper. 'I don't believe thee.' If I were inclined to, I should only have to call to mind the beautiful letters you wrote to me during your former visit to the Ashburtons in the Highlands, and which you afterward disavowed and trampled into the fire!"

"Lady Ashburton is very kind to offer to take me back. Pray, make her my thanks. . . . If you go back with the Ashburtons it would be different, as then I should be going merely as part of your luggage, without self-responsibility. Settle it as you like, it will be all one to me, meeting you at Scotsbrig, or in Edinburgh, or going by myself from Thornhill."

On a journey home, her husband had insisted on her sitting in a violent draught all the way—the same husband who so

properly counseled his Brother James to "Do nothing that is selfish"; in consequence of which he had to record "a sad, sick winter awaited my dear one," which sad, sick winter made such an impression on his dear one that, two years afterward, she refused to join him because she might need to have a window shut when he preferred it open!

A woman who could remember so long and write so keenly could not have been altogether and at all times a comfortable woman for an intensely selfish man to live with. If, instead of suffering at the time and satirizing afterward, she had at the beginning quietly, resolutely, immovably resisted his will, gently instructed him in the rudiments of manly behavior to woman, and so developed the germ of love which unquestionably lay sleeping in his bosom, it would have been as much better for his character as for her happiness. Mr. Froude, at the outset, relinquishes the idea of happiness in the Carlyle marriage, and upholds it only on the stern ground of discipline. But it is impossible to see that the character of either was improved by the discipline. It is impossible not to see that the character of both was injured by selfishness on one side and submission on the other, and the experience is not changed in its nature by being baptized as discipline. Under cover of discipline are cloaked often enormous domestic crimes. Discipline is the ready verbal subterfuge when selfishness would escape condemnation. But we are taught to pray, *Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven*. In heaven it is done with rejoicing, harmony, happiness, not with tears and anguish and the crucifixion of every pleasure and aspiration. God's will is done on earth always. We cannot help it. But it is done with unspeakable woe. Jane Carlyle did it with pain and toil and tears, with the neglect, the harshness, the insult and the exactions of her husband. If God's will had been done on earth as it is in heaven, she would have been a cheerful, loving, and happy, as she was a faithful, patient, and disappointed wife. The Day of Judgment may yet open far enough to show us the beneficent consequence of all this unhallowed caprice and undeserved wretchedness, but as yet it is invisible. The recognized principles of human life testify that no woman can serve her husband so well in a servile as in a commanding position. No man can be so much benefited by a wife to whom he looks down as by one to whom he looks up.

Mrs. Carlyle injured her husband. Her self-surrender nourished in him the violence, the unreason, the arrogance, the injustice, the insensibility which should have been annihilated. There is no sign that a single fault of his grew less under her tutelage. The very virtue for which he is praised he owed to the coldness of his temperament. He apparently never resisted a temptation. The vices to which he was inclined he indulged in without restraint. In calm and solitude his conscience sometimes stirred; but when occasion offered, his violent self-indulgence crowded it down. Occasionally a rift in the selfishness which beclouded him made him ask himself, if he were not too contemptuously indifferent to those who were not forwarding him in his course, "his own private discontent mingling considerably with his zeal against evil-doers." "On the whole," he asks himself in such a lucid moment, "art thou not among the vainest of living men? at bottom among the very vainest?" In the midst of his vociferations against Jeffrey, he suddenly checks himself. "Merely as if he were not kind enough to me. Is he not kinder than most other men are? Shame on me!" "But oh, my dear Jeannie, do help me to be a little softer, to be a little merciful to all men, even gigmen. Why should a man, though bilious, never so nervous, impoverished, bug-bitten, and bedeviled, let Satan have dominion over him? Save me, save me, my Goody! It is on this side that I am threatened!"

She should have heeded this piteous appeal. On this side she should have helped him—to crucify his enormous conceit and selfishness, not to compass and indulge them. It is these occasional glimpses—rare and unfruitful as they are—which show us that Carlyle was not wholly given over to Satan, even during Mrs. Carlyle's life. Generally he was. Satan desired to have him and he had him.

She injured herself. In her eagerness to spare his bearish humors, she spoke harshly to her own mother, and bore the expiation till her death. In sympathy with him, she, the gentlest and most loving of women, learned to judge censoriously, to sneer at great causes, to sprinkle her talk with unseemly words. But it never went deep, to poison the springs of life. Her loveliness remained. Her gentle, tender, radiant nature responded to all sweetness and warmth. In the anguish of her last years she turned to her Maker with pathetic humility; and when her

husband's deep-buried heart was reached by her sufferings, and he became aware of her and kind, she thrilled with the new sensation as the earth answers to the sun.

The one reason which relieves her servitude from weakness is, that she thought his health demanded and his genius justified her sacrifice. And, indeed, he roared so lustily over his maladies that a more experienced woman than Mrs. Carlyle might be excused for supposing them real; while his genius was in truth sufficient to justify the sacrifice of everything but character. But his maladies were more than doubtful. Froude openly scoffs at his dyspepsia. In 1860, when he was sixty-five years old, sleeplessness was such a novelty to him that he could only express his impatience at it by jumping violently out of bed, though, says the anxious wife, "that sound overhead used to set my heart a-thumping to such a degree that I couldn't get another wink of sleep, and I was on the brink of a nervous fever when he left." "Poor loving soul!" annotates the sorrowful husband, reading the pitiful record after he had thumped her through the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

Carlyle's miseries are usually grotesque, even when his own retrospective review of them is thoroughly sincere and solemn. Enthusiastic praise, for him, is, "I did not fare intolerably there at all." Twinges of shame for his multifarious wailing over his ill health rarely appear. "By this time she must be beginning to know," he says, with a certain shamefaced brazenness, after having roused his mother's deep anxiety, "that when I shout 'Murder!' I am not always being killed,"—which his wife could never learn. "Bad health, too," he pleads again, and then, with a simultaneous gleam of self-knowledge and of self-defense against it,—“at least singularly changed health!” Intolerable suffering, rage, almost despair, was the result of his having to sit on a jury. "Carlyle returned from his travels very bilious," his wife writes gayly. "The amount of bile he does bring home to me is something 'awfully grand.'" "Carlyle," she writes again in equally merry mood, "has fallen to no work yet; but is absolutely miserable, nevertheless." He suffered unutterable things in Wales on account of his tea. In Germany he was half dead with "indigestion, insomnia, and continual chaotic wretchedness," whatever that may be. Indeed, most of Carlyle's ills take on a certain grand and cosmic character. His bootless carpenter's hurly-burly was "a kind of infer-

nal miracle; my first view of the Satan's invisible world that prevails in that department." His "lecture times" were "the vilest welter of odious confusions, horrors, and repugnancies." His new room was "work of Belial," and caused him "manifold reflections deep as Tophet," definable only as "the least inhabitable, and most entirely detestable and despicable bit of human workmanship." The poor workmen, "for real mendacity, for drunkenness, greediness, mutinous nomadism, and anarchic malfesance throughout, excelled all experience or conception." In short, he had at all times through life the solid comfort of bellowing like a bull of Bashan against its ills. He should not have been taken too seriously. The whole creation soured on his stomach; yet ten years after his wife was in her grave, Lord Ronald Gower reports him as "wonderfully hale and hearty for fourscore, his cheeks as ruddy as those of a charity-school boy, in force and in good spirits, his talk full of grist and humor," which shows how sanitary an act is bellowing.

The publication of these tell-tale letters, with all their remorseful confessions and annotations, are not the atonement for life-long sin which some would fain believe. They speak as strongly of Carlyle's lack of delicacy as of his love of truth. Death was indeed to him a great and terrible revealer. He saw as he had never seen before; but even then his long blindness made him see men only as trees walking. He repented as far as he saw, but he only saw through a glass darkly.

Significant is the difference between the accounts given by husband and wife of the same event. Unquestionably Carlyle meant to tell the truth. Rent with remorse, in his desolated home, he even meant to tell the truth against himself, and doubtless the penance ministered to him a bitter consolation. Yet human nature was strong in him and often he gave unconsciously a softer touch to his own portrait than the life permitted. He describes a visit to Lady Sandwich. "We staid some twelve or more days, which, except for my own continual state of worn-out nerves, were altogether graceful, touching, and even pleasant. . . ." Needless to say, his nerves were not worn out. They were in good preservation and stood him in good stead a score of years longer. But what says Mrs. Carlyle?

"For the rest I should have enjoyed this beautiful place excessively if Eve hadn't eaten that unfortunate apple,—in result of which there has ever since been always a something to prevent one's feeling one's self in paradise.

The something of the present occasion came in the form of lumbago! not into my own back but into Mr. C.'s, which made the difference so far as the whole comfort of my life was concerned. For it was the very first day of being here that Mr. C. saw fit to spread his pocket-handkerchief on the grass just after a heavy shower, and sit down on it for an hour and more in spite of all my remonstrances!! The lumbago following in the course of nature, there hasn't been a day that I felt sure of staying over the next, and of not being snatched away like Proserpine, as I was from the Grange last winter. For what avail the 'beauties of nature,' the 'ease with dignity' of a great house, even the hero worship accorded one, against the lumbago. . . . 'Lumbago, my dear, it is good that you should know in time, admits of but one consolation,—of but one happiness! viz., 'perfect liberty to be as ugly and stupid and disagreeable as ever one likes!' And that consolation, that happiness, that liberty reserves itself for the domestic hearth! And so all the ten days we have been here, it has been a straining on Mr. C.'s part to tear his way, through the social amenities, back to Chelsea,—while I have spent all the time I might have been enjoying myself in expecting to be snatched away."

This is somewhat less "graceful, touching, and even pleasant" to Mrs. Carlyle in the experience than to Mr. Carlyle in the retrospect. But "the lumbago, indeed, I have entirely forgotten," says this philosopher of the easiest minor morals. He is not without a certain jaunty repentance. "It seems, by this letter,"—he has no personal conscience of sin, but he gives in to documentary evidence!—"I was at times a very bad boy; and alas! my repentant memory answers too clearly, 'Yes.'"

When the "demon fowls" made the "sound-proof room" too noisy to be borne, Carlyle remembers only some thirteen years after that she came to him and proposed go to Ronca and rent the cottage outright, and "turn Ronca with his vermin out of it." "I looked at her with admiration, with grateful assent, 'Yes, if you can,' which I could only half believe." But in her letter contemporary, Carlyle's grace and gratitude find no record. She was nearly recovered from an accident, "when Mr. Carlyle came to me one morning, all of a sudden, and told me I must go up to London myself and take charge of some business—nothing less than trying to take the adjoining house ourselves. . . . I thought it a most wild-geese enterprise. I was sent on; and when Lady Ashburton and the others asked him why he sent poor me instead of going himself," he coolly answered, "Oh, I should only spoil the thing. She is sure to manage it." The contemporary document is more credible than the subsequent verbal report. Carlyle did not mean to give a false

report, but he instinctively shrank before the revealing light of his newly awakened conscience.

He tries to persuade himself that "Geraldine's Craigenputtoch Stories" are "mythical"; that the washing of the kitchen-floor "was probably as much a joyous half-frolic as of anything else"; "that of milking with her own little hand . . . must have had a spice of frolic or adventure in it." He well remembers her bringing in her first loaf of bread, late at night (eleven or so), "looking mere triumph or quizzical gayety." "In fact, the saving charm of her life at Craigenputtoch, which to another young lady of her years might have been so gloomy and vacant, was that of conquering the innumerable practical problems that had arisen for her there." "I do not think our days there were sad," continues his remorseful conscience, kicking against the pricks, "and certainly not hers in especial, but mine rather." And then he gives one final spasm. "We were not unhappy at Craigenputtoch; perhaps these were our happiest days!"

Alas! Geraldine's myths were truer than Thomas's misgivings. There is no more dangerous frequenter of a selfish man's house than a clear-eyed unmarried woman. She has no Blue-Beard's skeleton in her own closet to force her to hide his, from sheer sympathy. Geraldine's mythical recollections are fortified by facts. Over the graves of husband and wife flutters a letter which effectually extracts all the frolic and the charm from "that savage place where my two immediate predecessors," says Mrs. Carlyle, "had gone mad, and the third had taken to drink," and shows us the weary wife, watching her bread till one, two, three o'clock in the morning, and then laying her head on the table and sobbing aloud. She conquered. She conquered everything but Carlyle and death. In death she even conquered Carlyle. But it was no frolic.

Nor is Carlyle perfectly candid. This is much to say of Carlyle, and shows the extremity to which he was reduced. Nevertheless, it must be said that he is not perfectly candid. In his "Reminiscences," written a few weeks after his wife's death, he muses:

"In 1856, owing to many circumstances, . . . and owing chiefly, one may fancy, to the deeper downbreak of her own poor health, . . . in 1856 too evidently, to whatever owing, my poor little darling was extremely miserable. Of that year there is a bit of private diary, by chance left un-

burnt . . . Certain enough, she wrote various bits of diary and private record unknown to me ; but never anything so sore, down-hearted, harshly distressed, and sad as certain pages (right sure am I!) which alone remain as specimen."

From this diary he made extracts for publication — extracts which reveal her pain, but conceal the cause of her pain. Whereon advances fate, disguised as Froude, and says, sternly : "There ought to be no mystery about Carlyle, and there is no occasion for mystery," and clears it all away by further extracts which abundantly and painfully show that it was Carlyle's attention and assiduity to Lady Ashburton, set off against his long indifference, neglect, and harshness to his wife which caused her acute distress. It was not her health, and Carlyle knew that it was not her health. It was her husband. She had no vulgar jealousy. She was jealous as the Lord Almighty was jealous, who saw the children of Israel turn from Him who had brought them out of the house of bondage with a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night, to prostrate themselves before a golden calf. Miss Jewsbury says, "Any other woman would have laughed at Mr. C's bewitchment with Lady Ashburton." An inferior woman might have laughed. A worldly woman, who cared only for appearances, might have laughed ; but not a high-souled woman who had staked all on the nobleness of one man's nature.

Unaware that Froude would find him out, Carlyle mourns for Lady Ashburton publicly and decorously. "The most queen-like woman I had ever known or seen. The honor of her constant regard had for ten years back been among my proudest and most valued possessions. In no society, English or other, had I seen the equal or the second of this great lady that was gone." He does not lisp a syllable and he did not dream that Froude would lisp a syllable to show us that, while he was dancing attendance on this great lady, who never did anything but amuse herself with him, not her second, but her equal was sitting in her solitary prison-house mending his vile old boots, dying of his long neglect. After her death the judgment. Then he cries in anguish to Froude : "Oh ! if I could but see her for five minutes, to assure her that I had really cared for her throughout all that ! But she never knew it ; she never knew it." He had forty years in which to tell her. He prized and valued Lady Ashburton for the whole ten years he had known her. Lady Ashburton did not doubt his regard. But his wife lay cold in death before he

could snatch five minutes to assure her of what should have been the twice-told tale of every moment of his life.

The dead wife had her revenge when, four months after her death, at Addiscombe, in the room which had been Lady Ashburton's, he finished the reperusal and study of all her letters, and for the first time that sad, pale, patient, wrecked, and wretched life lay outspread before him, till he "realized the continual grinding wretchedness of it," and his own selfish, stalwart sin rose up to meet him. Perhaps heaven was kind in letting him think that rocks and mountains could hide him from the condemnation of men; in letting him for a time be partially hidden from his own accusing conscience. If he had come out absolutely without shelter, into the full glare of his Day of Judgment, he must have gone stark blind. That he did not, the publication of these papers proves. He is candid, ingenuous, noble to a considerable, even to a remarkable degree. In sackcloth and ashes, before all the people, he repents. But he is also human, and he first reduces his sins to their lowest terms. If he had more clearly perceived their enormity he would have kept them out of sight. They were not committed publicly. There was no call for public expiation. She had jealously hidden them. Even when she wrote of them to her friends, it was under a concealing veil of banter. She persisted in regarding it as a case of genius complicated with bile. He had it all in his own hands. He carefully read and annotated all the letters. He might have suppressed much that was damning to himself, that would have been shudderingly offensive to her. Delicacy would have dictated it; truth would not have forbidden. He could have relieved his own conscience and not have betrayed the jealously guarded secret of her life. He could have confessed all, yet divulged nothing, without the specific testimony of her letters and her papers, over which he had absolute legal not only, but moral control. He did try, though fruitlessly, to suppress the Lady Ashburton episode. He would have done his wife no injustice. Without specifying his household sins, her monument could have been made as stately and as enduring. But his eyes were blinded, his hand was holden. Fate, called Froude, received the power as it left his dying grasp, and the world has such a lesson as it will not soon forget.

Who shall say through what mercy of heaven it was vouchsafed to Carlyle to waken from his lethargy some months before his wife's death, to feel for her a thrill of natural pity, to show

to her somewhat a husband's sympathy. Her excruciating anguish penetrated to the deep places where abode his soul; slowly, slightly, he did lift his head from the "Friedrich mud element," in which he had been wallowing. His brusque and brutal footsteps were hushed to quiet. On the dark pages of his obstinacy and cruelty lay a gleam of light. "I cannot tell you," says the sufferer, happier in his unwonted kindness than health could make her in his savagery, "how gentle and good Mr. Carlyle is. He is as busy as ever, but he studies my comfort and peace as he never did before."

Like a ray of hope to the despairing came those few simple words to the wretched husband, who might have found her letters blinding with such sweet rays. "I have a kind of notion," he writes "(beautiful to me and sad exceedingly), she was never as happy again, after that sunniest youth of hers, as in the last eighteen months and especially the last two weeks of her life, when, after wild rain deluges and black tempests many, the sun shone forth again for another's sake with full, mild brightness, taking sweet farewell. Oh, it is beautiful to me, and oh, it is humbling and it is sad! Where was my Jeannie's peer in this world? and she fell to me and I could not screen her from the bitterest distresses! God pity and forgive me!" God forgive him chiefly for this, that he could have screened her from the bitterest distresses and did not—caused them, rather!

His life-long neglect gathered itself to attention during that last brief, sane interval, and he forced upon her failing strength the luxury of a carriage—which, alas! in the irony of fate became her coffin. "It is the mercy of heaven to me, the rest of my life," he cries, in a surprised agony of joy. "And why was it not undertaken years before? . . . It was an inestimable mercy to me that I did at last throw aside everything for a few days and actually got her that poor brougham. Never was soul more grateful for so small a kindness, which seemed to illuminate, in some sort, all her remaining days for her. It was, indeed, useful and necessary as a means of health, but still more precious, I doubt not, as a mark of my regard for her. Ah, me! she never knew fully, nor could I show her, in my heavy-laden miserable life, how much I had at all times regarded, loved, and admired her. No telling of her now. Five minutes more of your dear company in this world. Oh! that I had you yet for but five minutes, to tell you all!"

He mistook the ability of his miserable life, but the regret was sincere. It is what prevents him from being a moral monster. The sacrifice was complete, but it was not in vain. In the solitude of death he heard the voice of God, and he did not hide himself. He saw his sin, and he repented. In his surly and stormy breast a heart began to grow and glow. In all literature I know nothing more beautiful, more heart-breaking than the simple words which voice his dawning love, his undying lament. The very egotism whose looming proportions had darkened her life helped now to illuminate its worth. A less child-like heart would have nourished its love in silence. But he had no mis-giving that his newly awakened tenderness might be a less interesting revelation to the world than to himself, nor is it. The weaknesses, even the babble of such a genius as Carlyle is more significant than the highest wisdom of ordinary minds. And babble it sometimes was. Dickens never conceived or Mrs. Gamp uttered more comical incongruities than Carlyle pens in perfect good faith. With his juvenile perspective he appeals as remorsefully to heaven, because she only took hot water when he took tea, as if his habit and purpose had been to starve her. But the babble is as nothing compared to the unutterable pathos:

‘I doubt if I ever saw a nobler human soul than this which (alas! alas! never rightfully valued till now) accompanied all my steps for forty years. Blind and deaf that we are! oh, think, if thou yet love anybody living, wait not till death sweep down the paltry little dust-clouds and idle dissonances of the moment, and all be at last so mournfully clear and beautiful, when it is too late!

“I was rich once, had I known it—very rich; and now I am become poor to the end.

“Oh, my dear one! sad is my soul for the loss of thee, and will be to the end, as I compute! Lonelier creature there is not henceforth in this world; neither person, work, nor thing going on in it that is of any value in comparison, or even at all. Death I feel almost daily in express fact,—death is our haven,—and have occasionally a kind of kingship, sorrowful but sublime, almost godlike, in the feeling that that is nigh. . . . Oh! my dearest, my dearest! that cannot now know how dear.

“Weak little darling, thy sleep is now unbroken; still and serene in the eternities (as the Most High God has ordered for us), and nobody more in this world will wake for my wakefulness.”

Faintly, as his Day of Judgment dawned upon him, dawned also upon his darkened mind the consciousness of his wife's

superiority. It is his salvation that he was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision.

"In my life I have seen no human intelligence that so genuinely pervaded every fiber of the human existence it belonged to.

"My noble one! I say deliberately her part in the stern battle — and except myself none knows how stern — was brighter and braver than my own.

"Never in my pretended superior kind of life, have I done, for love of any creature, so supreme a kind of thing. It touches me at this moment with penitence and humiliation, yet with a kind of soft religious blessedness.

"As to 'talent,' epistolary and other, these letters, I perceive, equal and surpass whatever of best I know to exist in that kind. . . . Not all the Sands and Eliots and babbling *cohue* of 'celebrated scribbling women' that have strutted over the world in my time could, it seems to me, if all boiled down and distilled to essence, make one such woman."

To respect all women a man must first learn to respect one woman. It took forty years of closest association to make Carlyle aware of one woman who did not scribble. It is little that the evil spirit of unbelief made vain, though vicious, clutches at "scribbling women," as it came out of him.

"Her little bit of a first chair, its wee, wee arms visible to me in the closet at this moment, is still here, and always was. I have looked at it hundreds of times, from of old, with many thoughts. No daughter or son of hers was to sit there; so it had been appointed us, my darling. I have no book a thousandth part so beautiful as thou; but these were our only 'children' — and in a true sense, these were verily ours.

"God reward thee, dear one! now when I cannot even own my debt. Oh, why do we delay so much, till death makes it impossible?"

Carlyle's tardy but enthusiastic appreciation of his wife's intellect was not the partial and worthless judgment of a too late aroused and morbid affection. It is founded on the indisputable facts of her history, which only a colossal self-absorption and self-conceit hid so long from his eyes; on indubitable gifts of her nature, crushed so heavily under his hand.

It is not simply that her slight, fragmentary writings show discrimination, originality, the vision and the faculty divine. It is not simply that she read, criticised, and appreciated Carlyle. Her life was lofty. Her moral plane was immeasurably above Carlyle's. Her intellectual forces were far more accurately poised. Her human insight was keener and clearer. While Carlyle clamored through the amazed earth for his right relations with the universe, Mrs. Carlyle calmly and silently adjusted her visible relations with time and with Carlyle. While Carlyle

was clattering in all ears the stern command to be rigidly virtuous, Mrs. Carlyle was quietly, in the devil's name, being virtuous, and no more about it. Carlyle spent a long life of the deepest fancied woe in explaining, enforcing, inculcating himself, under the mistaken idea, indeed, that himself was the universe. Mrs. Carlyle effaced herself, considering truly that her theory of the infinite was unimportant; while her discharge of the finite duty imported all. Carlyle was not content to become the best kind of man; but he made the poorest kind of god. Mrs. Carlyle, looking upward in her enforced low estate, discerned a truth of which Carlyle never dreamed—that it is not the victory, but the struggle which signifies. To man belongs the struggle. The victory is to the Power outside of ourselves which established the universe.

What Carlyle's lips prophesied, what his life belied, is taught with stern severity in his death. To a pressing and what to him was an irresistible philosophy, he sacrificed his nearest duty, and his philosophy was false. There needs no marvelous knowledge, no divine revelation for this judgment. Carlyle himself shall be the judge. "Without love there is no knowledge," he says, and thereby stands condemned. He had no love for humanity and the motive of human life escaped him. He loved his own notion of humanity. He loved the intellectual phantom of some remote phase of humanity; but men and women he did not love. He lacked that human sympathy which is essential to the comprehension of human character, to the interpretation of human action. His acute, massive, and splendid intellect was held in leash by an incredibly sluggish heart. It was the same in great things and in small—a woman, a nation, a pet. He stumbled along blindfold and blundering because he did not know what love alone could tell him. He lived beside his wife forty years and never discovered her till she was dead. Her little dog Nero gamboled about him till the faithful, fond life was crushed out, and Carlyle was utterly surprised to find that he missed him, that the want of him was anything but a riddance. A vast historic convulsion, the culmination of a national drama, one of the great movements of the world gathered and spent its mighty force before his eyes and he stolidly and sordidly saw in it only a vulgar squabble, a smoky chimney, fit theme for coarse characterization, "that beautiful nigger agony or civil war of theirs," "that thrice-abject nigger-delirium." Not till the elemental strife

had long been composed to peace, lapsing into tranquil and happy growth, did his torpid heart struggle up to his candid brain to arouse the suspicion that "perhaps there was more in that matter, after all, than I was aware of." If he had been a wise man he would not have taken fourscore years to learn that, while he was vexing the earth with his wild hunt for his right relations with the universe, the universe was rolling on just as unimpeded as if he had found them. While he was proclaiming the divine right of autocratic power, the individual was just as surely rising up and justifying his right to be as if Carlyle had been lifting him. He saw, and admitted that he saw, the great swell of the European wave breaking on the American shore and diffusing itself over the American soil more equably than any absolute monarch could have ordered it; and beneath that one wave alone, his philosophy was submerged. How the king shall come to his own, is not a vital question, because we see it was fore-ordained that the king come to his own. Popular election is a noble appeal to the manhood in every heart. It may fail; but its trial has scarcely begun and it can hardly fail more disastrously than the old ways. What is clear, what waits for no demonstration, is that no path is so proven as to warrant a man in violating all private obligations to thrust society into it. The road of modern christendom may be right or wrong; but no one has a right to sacrifice that for which he is responsible to that for which he is not responsible. The Day of Judgment has only dawned; but the dawn is light enough to show us that, while a man's relations to the universe are a high and worthy object of study, it is by his relations to his wife that he is to be justified or condemned. Universal truth is unknowable. This world is absolutely, though not equally unintelligible to all its inhabitants—the wisest as well as the weakest. No man by searching can find it out, though it is the noblest quest upon which a soul can enter, toward which it may constantly turn with unabated fervor, but with ever undisturbed and sacred calm. To strengthen every faculty upon it, to minimize every evil with it, is worthy of a man. To break one's heart against it is proper only to a weakling. To whelm other lives beneath it is the part of a lunatic or a fiend. For individual truth remains. Its stress is undeniable. It is personal duty. Its name is love. Its expression is helpfulness. Its instinct is unselfishness. It may go wrong, but it can never be wrong. It is in the line of all truth. It is under the law of all worlds.

It is a misuse of words to say that Jane Carlyle has her revenge. It is not a misuse of words to say that she has her vindication. Forty years long was this temple in building—forty long years without sound of hammer or axe, with no visible sign of architecture; and suddenly it rears its gracious majesty and purity forever to the skies. “Gone in her car of victory in that beautiful death” was the sad shadow of the radiant girl, and knew not that of her name and fame would be left even a shadow; and wheresoever the gospel of Carlyle shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also what this woman hath done be told for a memorial of her. What she had said in youthful gayety is the fulfilled prophecy of her warped and somber life: “Were you to look through a microscope, you might be puzzled to discover a trace of what I do. Nevertheless, depend upon it, my doings are not lost; but, invisible to human eyes, they ‘sail down the stream of time into the ocean of eternity,’ and who knows but I may find them after many days?” They are found after many days, for God is the only public opinion. The dreams of her aspiring girlhood in practical fulfillment, the gratification of every taste, the congenial occupation of every faculty could have built her no fairer monument than did her baffled, broken life. Like all mortals, she would have failed in accomplishment; now the imagination credits her with all it creates.

For Carlyle, the penalty outlives the sin. Upon his great genius lies the lasting stain of his ferocious selfishness. Forever and forever the bed-bugs of his household will crawl across the pages of his history to defile and defame. He is not destroyed; because, apart from the grandeur and fiber of his intellect, his character was so ample that, with all its deficiencies, a wealth remains. Jane Carlyle is not only vindicated in herself, but may be justified in her husband. Always, like Philip Ostrander dying in the forest, a future in his face returned her gaze. It is as if nature planned him on too large a scale, withdrew exhausted before her work was done, and intrusted his completion to the slow, agonizing process wherein another life was consumed. Created with an overpowering intellect, but with a mere rudimentary heart, his development required the offering of a rare and radiant maiden who should lavish on him her heart and soul and life. Iphigenia was found, and from the smoke of that most costly sacrifice uprose the true Carlyle.

GAIL HAMILTON.